# Koenings' Reeded Edge Half Newsletter #74

December 15, 2025

Dear Reeded Edge Half Collector:

My first half dollar book "Reeded Edge Half Dollars, 1836 to 1839, R-4 to R-8 Die Varieties" had 100 copies printed in February 2018. It was meant to be a supplement to Dick Graham's "A Registry of Die Varieties of Reeded Edge Half Dollars, 1836-1839" that had 325 copies printed in 2012. Dick's book was so popular at the time that it was sold out by December 2015. David Kahn was given permission to print an additional 100 copies of Dick's book in January 2018. They were sold out by December 2022. In early 2021, Dick sold his collection of Reeded Edge Halves and stated he wouldn't be printing any additional copies of his book.

For the last 7 years, I have been emailing photos and information on Reeded Edge Halves with Newsletter #1 being emailed in May 2018. At first, I sent my Newsletters every 3 months. However, when Glenn Peterson asked me to give a speech on Reeded Edge Halves to the Bust Half Nut club at the 2019 ANA Coin Show at Rosemount, IL on August 15, 2019, I started a new monthly series on Reeded Edge Halves beginning with the 1836 Die Marriage. It included the "38 Most Common Reeded Edge Halves" and was completed by November 15, 2022 with the 1839-O GR-1 Die Marriage. They were R-3 and lower.

In July 2024, I published my 3rd Census on Reeded Edge Halves in the J R Journal and E-Gobrecht Journal. At that time, 15th place reported having 19 Die Marriages. There were only 43 collectors that responded to the Census. My 2nd book on halves "The Koenings Collection of 1839 Philadelphia Half Dollars, Including Liberty Seated Half Dollars" was printed in May 2023. Since then, I have discovered the 2nd known 1839-O GR-3 and co-found with 2 other collectors the first "New Discovery" since Graham wrote his book, the 1837 GR-27 Die Marriage. It was published in the March 2025 J R Journal. There are now 57 die marriages known with at least 4 special die marriages that I also recommend collecting. PCGS Registry currently shows only 55 die marriages. PCGS includes the 1838-O die marriage as a Proof Only issue and they still haven't recognized the 1837 GR-27 Die Marriage.

As of September 3, 2024, I have accomplished all of my goals as a Reeded Edge Half collector. I now have the most complete collection by die state. The only die marriage that I am missing is the 1838-O GR-1 (9 known). Jules Reiver and Dick Graham were both serious die state collectors. Neither one owned an 1838-O GR-1.

Since January 2025, I have noticed a large number of collectors are selling their collections. One Bust Half Nut sold his entire collection of 40 Reeded Edge Halves. They had an average grade of 60 and all were at least AU55. Many were among the finest knowns. I also noticed **several** Bust Quarter collectors selling their collections. Some were coins I haven't seen for over 20 years.

# Notice

Newsletter #73, emailed on October 15, 2025, was the official start of my Semi-Retirement. What does that mean? Old age and family health issues are causing me to need more time between Newsletters. In the past, by the time I finished one Newsletter, it was time to do the next. Updating files and preparing a For Sale list has become impossible. I need more time for exercise (for me that is bowling, something I haven't done since June 2022, when I caught Covid). I started coin collecting in early 1954. Six months later, I started to bowl. At that time, bowling cost 25 cents a game. My Franklyn Half set started to shrink as I could bowl 2 games for every half dollar. Back then, bowlers didn't have automatic scorekeeping, so I could keep score for 10 bowlers at 10 cents each and make $2.00 each league. Some nights, I would do two leagues and make $4. That was enough to bowl 16 games. My goal is to start bowling in leagues again and spend less time on Newsletters.

There are 3 things that are going to happen, first the Newsletters will now be emailed every 2 months. This Newsletter #74 is scheduled for December 15, 2025.

Second, the Newsletters will be shorter, hopefully less than 7 to 8 pages. I plan to continue the series on 1838 Die Marriages. So far, I have provided you with photos and information on 1838 GR-1 to GR-7 Die Marriages. Although 1838 is one of the easiest years to attribute (only 16 die marriages), most collectors will find that 1838 GR-5 and 1838 GR-16 may be difficult to find. Of the remaining 14 die marriages, only 1838 GR-2 and 1838 GR-12 may require paying a premium depending on the grade level you are collecting. Anyone can find 14 of the 16 known die marriages.

Third, starting with the 1838 GR-8 die marriage, I will be showing a large photo of the obverse and reverse and have a blowup of the date showing the relationship of the last digit (8) compared to 183 and Star 13. Although most collectors will be able to attribute all 1838 die marriages, once you get used to looking at the last digit, you will notice that it is either higher or lower and closer or further away from 183 and Star 13. For those of you who collect die marriages by die state, these blowup photos may help you attribute the difficult Prime specimens that are without die breaks.

# 1838 GR-8 Die Marriage

Graham rated this die marriage R-2 (501 to 1,000 known. Looking at his census in 2012, he had 66, 66, 65, 64, 64, 64, 62, 62, 62, 61 and 61. In my 2024 Census for Reeded Edge Halves, I had 63, 62, 58, 58, 58, 55, 50, 45, 35 and 35. I currently rate this die marriage R-3 (201 to 500 known). 1838 GR-8 may be the 5$^{th}$ most difficult die marriage to find of all 1838's.

Prior to Dick Graham's book in 2012, the die marriage was listed as 1838 JR-5 (Jules Reiver's designation in his Variety Identification Manual in 1988).

**1838 GR-8, PCGS AU55 Obverse7**

This obverse is the 7th use for the year 1838. Several of the most significant attributes are shown on the above specimen. Star 8 (see circle) is heavily recut. There is a die crack that starts at the bust and continues through Stars 1 through Star 6 and through Liberty's Cap. Graham mentions that GR-8 comes with a preponderance of planchet roller strikes (see above cap). It appears that Liberty's lips are open. This die marriage comes with weakly struck stars.

**1838 GR-8, PCGS AU55 Reverse G**

This appears to be a Later Die Stage of Reverse G where TA in STATES and LF in HALF are weakly struck. This specimen shows "short stubby talons, that don't touch the arrow feathers" similar to 1838 GR-5 (not normal).

Although Graham reports a large number of high-grade specimens in his 2012 Census, I believe most collectors have a hard time finding decent specimens.

**1838 GR-8, PCGS AU55 date blowup with lines**

Newsletter #74 starts a new series on Reeded Edge Halves where I am asking the readers to look at the last digit in the date and notice how high or low, how close or far it is to 183. The top line goes from the top of the 3 to the center of closest point on Star 13. In this case the top of the 8 is well above the line. The other lines show the 8 is tilted to the left with the bottom much farther apart.

In the above photo, you will notice what looks like a (Ghost recut on the bottom of the 2nd 8). I have noticed this on several GR-8's. It is not the same as the recut at the bottom of the 2nd 8 on the extremely tough to find 1838 GR-16. GR-8 has "short stubby talons on the right, far from the arrow feathers". GR-16 has the talon almost touching the arrow feather.

Most collectors will find 1838 (with only 16 die marriages) to be easy to attribute without the blowup of the date. Most die stage collectors will find it easier to attribute PRIME specimens using this feature. **Get used to looking at the last digit, every time.**

## Notice

## Attached to Newsletter #74 is another document "1838 GR-1 through 1838 GR-7 – Date Blowup with Lines". Make sure you print it out.

You now have Blowup Dates for 1838 GR-1 through 1838 GR-8. Future Newsletters will show 1838 GR-9 through 1838 GR-16. Some of my readers are placing their Newsletters in a binder. I recommend you do the same. By the time you have 1838 GR-16, you will have date positions for all 13 obverses of 1838. You will notice 1838 GR-15 has the highest position of the last 8 while 1838 GR-4 may have the 2nd highest position. 1838 GR-5 and GR-6 appear to have the 2nd 8 at the same height as the 3 in the date. 1838 GR-2 may have the widest space, at the bottom of 38. **Again, get used to looking at the last digit, every time.**

## Conclusions

In 1988, Jules Reiver printed about 125 to 150 copies of his (VIM) "Variety Identification Manual for United States Reeded Edge Half Dollars, 1836- 1839". After several years of trying to use it, most collectors determined that it was too difficult to use. Dick Graham, after spending many hours with Jules in 1997, spent another 15 years studying Reeded Edge Halves and in June 2012 had his book " A Registry of Die Varieties of Reeded Edge Half Dollars, 1836 – 1839" printed. At that time, it was so popular that the original 325 copies were sold out by 2015. In January 2018, gave permission to David Kahn to print an additional 100 copies. Graham sold his collection in 2022 and he has stated that he will not make any further reprints of his book.

There is still so much that collectors don't know about Reeded Edge Halves. No other series is more undervalued than Reeded Edge Halves. Perhaps the best example is a Classic Rarity as 1838-O GR-1 in PCGS PR64BM that did not make the reserve in Heritage's Auction in April 2025 ($650,000+130,000). There are only 9 specimens known. **Anyone can find 50 out of 56 known die marriages of Reeded Edge Halves and yet my 2024 Census had less than 10 collectors that had 43 specimens or more.** I see opportunities on eBay every week.

## Collectors Comments

Now that I am semi-retired (Newsletters scheduled every two months) I will have more time to work on my collection by die state and will offer duplicates for sale. Two weeks ago, Gary Rosner met with me, and we have decided not to use the decimal system that Russell J. Logan and John W. McCloskey used on Federal Half Dimes or the system used by The Bust Half Nut Club on "Die State Progressions of the Capped Bust Half Dollar Die Varieties 1807 – 1836". We have decided to use a system closer to that used by Steve Tomkins for "Early United States Quarters" and like Rory Rea's system for "Early Quarter Dollars Of The United States Mint". Next week we are scheduled to look at 23 specimens that I have between 1837 GR-2 and 1837 GR-5. This is an interesting series as all 4 die marriages use the same obverse. When we are through, I am hoping to have at least 12 different states of the obverse. I will keep the best for my collection and will offer duplicates For Sale in future.Newsletters.

## Next Newsletter

Newsletter #75 is scheduled for February 15, 2025 and will present the 1838 GR-9 Die Marriage.

# For Sale

**Books** **Price, includes postage**

Reprint of "Reeded Edge Half Dollars, 1836 to 1839, R-4 to R-8 Die Varieties" $25.00
43 pages, Mylar cover with large 6" photos

"The Koenings Collection of 1839 Philadelphia Half Dollars" (Printed in May 2023)
Including Liberty Seated Half Dollars. 71 pages + indexes, Mylar covers 6" photos $50.00
(only 39 books remain out of 100 printed)

## Coins

1838 GR-5 Reverse with 75% rev. die break, PCGS VF25 Cert. No. 56917219 …….$6,000.

1838 GR-5 Reverse with 70% rev. die break PCGS VF35 Cert. No. 44253373 …… 7,000

1839 GR-8 LDS, Rev. Die Break R-5, SEGS XF45 Cert. No. 5079341106122720325 1,500

Below are some bargain coins that I bought for my brother-in-law, after April 2025. Unfortunately he had to file for bankruptcy and could no longer afford them.

1837 GR-1, R-5, PCGS graded this coin VF details, I grade the coin XF to AU with Nice surfaces, well struck hair, well struck feathers. There is no chip in R. I paid over $500 for this coin. It has full dentils on both the obverse and the reverse. $ 700

1837 GR-6, R-4, PCGS XF details. Cert. No. 51356662 weak LDS strike ……. 300

1837 GR-16, R-4+ PCGS AU details, spot removed, Cert. No. 47810236 – tough …. 500

1837 GR-23, R-2 PCGS VF35, Cert.No. 50842804…… 250

Terms

1. Check or Postal Money Order Only
2. California residents must pay 8% sales tax or provide resale certificate
3. Provide mailing address

Send payments to:

Jim Koenings
P. O. Box 2382
Riverside, CA 92516